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Students and the Religion of To-day

By BRUCE CURRY, REINHOLD NIEBUHR
G. A. STUDDERT KENNEDY

*A Survey of Our Student Life
and of the Present Religious
Situation as It Affects
American Students*

THE NATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE
MILWAUKEE, WIS.

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FOREWORD

The college student of to-day faces a confused and perplexing world. For four years he comes into the heart of a corporate life which is surging with forces of all kinds and currents flowing in many and diverse directions. "Restlessness," "dissatisfaction," "revolt," "yearning," "inarticulate idealism" are some of the elements in the spirit of that world. He partially understands that world for he is part and parcel of it. But he never wholly understands it, for he comes into a corporate life which is the creation of forces set in motion before his own college days, forces which he vaguely senses as they do their quiet but inexorable work of stirring and molding his life as well as that of his fellows. In brief, he comes into a life the dominant influences of which are ready-made.

No less confused and perplexing is the religious world he confronts. He finds himself in an atmosphere charged with a variety of phrases—"fundamentalist," "modernist," "positivist," "mechanist," "behaviorist"—terms the technical definition of which he may know by heart, but the true significance of which he glimpses only very imperfectly. For they, too, are not developments which have sprung up over night, but positions which have their roots far back of the present college generation and their ever-recurring parallels back through history almost to the dawn of man's life-story. Small wonder that our student's attitude toward them is likely to be superficial if not absurd, for he lacks that one essential for an understanding of the life of one's own day—a knowledge of the source-springs of that life, historical perspective.

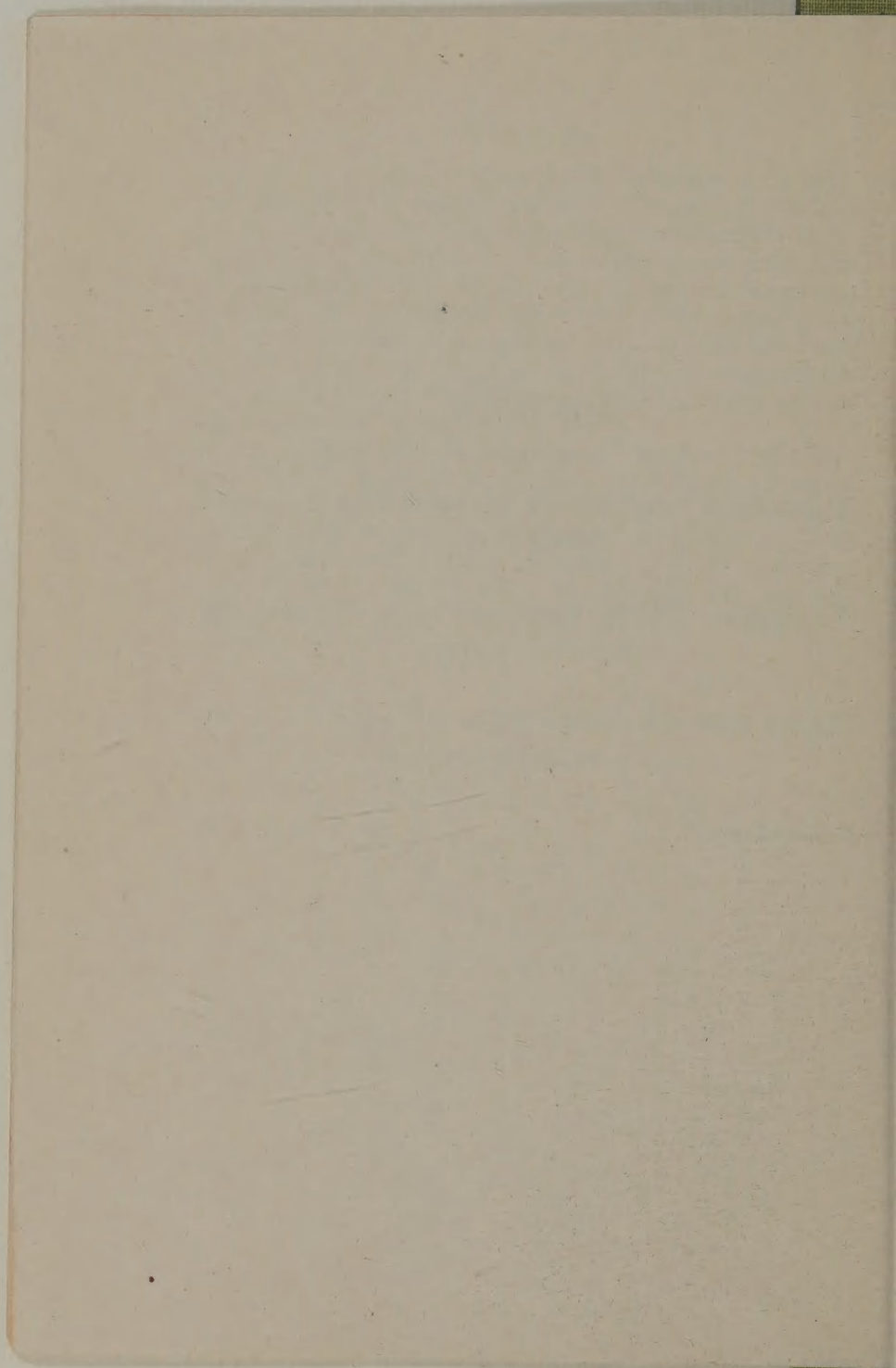
This pamphlet aims to help students toward a better understanding of themselves and their day. The three essays

although independent mark a definite progress of thought. The first seeks to explain the most important forces and trends which have gone into the making of student life itself, with a hint or two as to ways out. The second deals with the fundamental nature of our corporate life—our social and economic life—particularly with a view toward its influence on religion. The third outlines some of the dominant features of the intellectual life of to-day, and suggests the way in which they have affected our faith—and the ways in which our faith must transform them.

The pamphlet with its companions, "Students and Life" and "Danger Zones of the Social Order" has been issued as preparation for those who are coming to the NATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE at Milwaukee. It is hoped it will prove helpful to all students who earnestly desire to understand the life of our day better in order that they may the more effectively throw themselves into the rebuilding of that life.

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STUDENTS AND THE RELIGION OF TO-DAY

Where American Students Are— and Why

BY BRUCE CURRY¹

One frequently hears opinions tossed off about American college students. Here is a typical assortment:

"Our college students are the hope of the future, the strong young leaders of to-morrow."

"College students are obsessed by the easy-dollar idea and are little help in idealistic causes."

"They are unreliable under responsibility, do not make good workers."

"A snobbish lot, making little effort to fit into community life back at home."

"Have the faults of immaturity, but are the finest lot of citizens in America."

"They are good destructive critics, Mencken-wise, but not much help on creative efforts."

¹ For the past several years, there has been no voice more in demand or more widely trusted in student circles than that of Dr. A. Bruce Curry. In visits to college campuses literally from Coast to Coast and from the Gulf to Canada, and in summer conferences, state conventions and week-end retreats, he has been helping students to find themselves in this new day. No one knows the student mind of to-day and the forces which have made it what it is better than he. For more than a year, he has been the Chairman of the General Committee, planning the Milwaukee NATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE. He will deliver the opening address of the Conference and guide the discussion group leaders throughout.

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"Not more than half of them are capable of receiving any real benefit from a college education."

"They are *promising* youngsters, but short on performance."

"They are just dear children, let them have their fling."

"As standardized as Fords and ashamed of anything intellectual."

"If the college men are the cream of the earth, God help the skimmed milk."

"They are neither better nor worse than their contemporaries."

How do these opinions square with what you yourself know of college and university students? It might be interesting to go back over the list, considering how much truth and fairness there is in each, and whether such statements apply to the majority of students or only in less degree.

Fair play would demand that we let students speak for themselves. Perhaps this treatise will stimulate them to do so. The writer would welcome comments from every side. I have before me pages of statements made by undergraduates, throwing much light on what they themselves feel. For the past three years it has been my privilege to lead discussions with students in every part of the country. These too have been revealing. My attempt here is to offer tentatively some analysis of the present state of affairs, some explanation of why students are where they are, some directions in which they may profitably seek to find the way out to even finer living, and the bearing on all this of the Christian quest for God and for the Kingdom of heaven.

Since I am writing especially for those whose faces will be turned toward the Student Conference in Milwaukee,² either because they are to attend it or because their interest centers there while they remain behind, I shall have the Christian students of America primarily in mind. This

² The National Student Conference, December 28-January 1, under the auspices of the Council of Christian Associations.

relieves us of the greater task of speaking for and about *all* sorts of students who make up our campus population. Yet the Christian group itself will bear me witness that the line between "Christian" and "non-Christian" shades off so imperceptibly that the definition need not make our treatment too specialized. And there are perhaps "fifty-seven varieties" of so-called Christian students.

I. STUDENTS REFLECT AMERICAN LIFE

This is the first thing to be said when we seek to size up the status quo among students, and to explain how they came to be where they are. It is a point sometimes overlooked by the critics of student behavior, those who seem to think of the student population as a separate species to be singled out and thought of as a "problem," to be showered with laurels or brickbats.

Students are tired of being cast as "a problem." They are bored by the Grundys who puzzle and groan over their wickedness, as well as by the slush mongers who constantly expect the sprouting of angels' wings. With all the attempts to pit youth over against age, the campus over against the town, it begins to be seen by the students themselves, (a) that they are not so very different in ideals and habits from their elders; and (b) not so different either from non-college young people of their own age. There *are* some differences, and these will be noted later. For the most part they are differences of degree, a special heightening or lowering of the lights due to the campus setting. But first we must see the more common likenesses.

If one will take the list of comments on college people which I gave at the beginning of this inquiry, he will readily see that such criticisms might be passed with equal validity upon persons and groups in our country who have never whiffed the atmosphere of college halls. Some of those statements would apply to almost any American group of bankers, boiler-makers, bootleggers, realtors, Rotarians, or reformers. Like other folks, students have been molded

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into what they are now by the environmental forces which shape the life about them. If students needed any answer to their harsher critics, it might well be: "Ye have made us in your own image."

If we wish then to see more clearly the mind-set of students, their standards and ideals, their attitudes and prejudices, their characteristic responses which have become habit-systems,—as one student put it, "what we are and can't help it"; and if we wish to understand further how students came by all this, we have only to take a look at those same factors in the home and community life of America to-day. This is so large an order that we can here suggest only a few of the more general and controlling elements. As you read, consider how each of these characteristics is projected into student life.

1. Industrial Philosophy

In a country of rich resources and uncounted new opportunities, *we are a nation of explorers, inventors, builders, manufacturers, developers.* This has important consequences for our attitudes and ideals.

First, it puts the emphasis on action rather than on reflection, on the "strenuous life" as against the life of thought, of philosophy, of æsthetic appreciation. If we have used our heads it has been chiefly in directing our hands. We have been most at home when up against lumber, the soil, the mine, cattle, bricks, concrete, iron and steel, the machine, the market. Until recently only a few men and no women at all were needed for the professions.

The first American colleges were avowedly founded to train men for the service of the church and the state. Later the ideal was announced as training for citizenship. Now the emphasis has shifted largely to training for vocations, and chiefly to vocations of the sort implied above. Witness the huge increase in our agricultural, mechanical, technical and business colleges and departments. Formerly, when a man was called "college-bred" we could assume that he

knew something of literature, history, and the cultural heritage of the race, that he was somewhat at home in the world of ideas and ideals, that he had learned to discriminate in the field of mental and spiritual values. To-day the term college-bred may mean almost none of that, but rather that the man has learned to build bridges, feed cows or pull teeth. I am not arguing that these latter accomplishments are unimportant. My point is only that this situation gives us a different sort of college student, from whom we cannot expect the sort of understandings, interests, insights, and abilities which we might have demanded some fifty years ago. And I stress the fact that this is not the fault of the present students, but is a logical result of the national trend pointed out above.

America is getting from the colleges what she most demands, trained technicians who can *do* things in terms of material development. She must not draw too long a face if these same young specialists are aliens to the commonwealth of thought, culture, and spiritual values. She must not be surprised at the recent statement of a well-known college professor that half the students of our country "don't think, can't think and can't be taught to think."

Second, our national bent toward pioneering activity gives us a special ideal of what constitutes success. It does tend to make the dollar mark our national emblem, for wealth is the natural symbol of material production. In such a situation when any poor boy may become a millionaire and the men of riches are the men of power, it is not surprising if the college man decides to adopt as his standard: "I would rather be *rich* than President." And if he does go to college with the motive of entering a vocation which will yield him more money; if he does look with some scorn or pity upon another student who is preparing to become, say, a school-teacher; if he does leave college after a year or two, at the lure of easy money, he is only running true to American form.

And because this kind of success in our land has often been so rapidly, easily, or cheaply attained, it has created

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unduly the gambling spirit, the belief that with good luck one may "get by" without too much hard work. A premium is put upon beating the system, since the popular idea prevails that a Rockefeller, a Ford, a Wrigley, a big butter and egg man, succeeded not so much by painful labor as by "using his head" and "striking it right." Even the *American Magazine* is unable to down this luck and smartness myth. Hence we should expect to find students in large numbers planning to "get by" on their ingenuity and praying with sublime faith to the god of chance.

Third, being a nation of producers and manufacturers, we have become a nation of salesmen. This came with the development of mass production methods, with the growth of urban population, with the tightening of competition both in domestic and foreign markets. High-pressure selling methods have swept the country. Selling has become a national state of mind. The term is applied to every sort of commodity. Even the World War had to be "sold" to America, and one "sells" himself to his acquaintances. The question then becomes not "Is it wanted? has it value?" but "Can I sell it?" Imbued with this psychology our students will naturally be found trying to "sell" a recitation to a professor, to "sell" themselves to a fraternity, to push off on the public anything it can be induced to take. Note here the barely hidden suggestion that the quality is inferior, calling for shrewd salesmanship to get the goods across. How easy then to slight quality of work or character and to get by on smooth selling technique!

Fourth, in the evolution of these national traits, our highly developed commercial and industrial systems have put a heavy strain on our business ethics; so much so that around the world the name Yankee is synonymous with hard or sharp bargaining. Many a shady deal is covered by our generally accepted dictum that "business is business," or "every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost." Capitalism runs wild (unchecked as in other countries by powerful communistic, socialistic, and labor forces) and wields a sometimes ruthless bludgeon. Workers and small

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interests retaliate by all sorts of cheap frauds and petty dishonesties. It becomes considered a virtue rather than a vice to beat a railroad fare or to cheat any other large corporation.

Therefore it ought to be received without too great a shock when we learn that college students, having lived some sixteen years in such an atmosphere, take readily to cribbing, lie rather freely, or fail to pay their debts. I do not say we should excuse it in them, but that we should understand how it comes about. It is highly to their credit that honor standards on most campuses are as high and as rigidly enforced as they are. Nor should we marvel at the prevalence of gambling, against the background of the stock exchange. Nor at students' apathy toward the injustices of an industrial system by which their parents and honored home-town citizens are contentedly profiting.

Fifth, along with these developments has come an extraordinarily rapid rise in American standards of living. Some of this is wholesome of course. But it has put a premium on extravagance, inducing a complex of "keeping up with the Joneses," extending those of moderate means to foolish lengths to ape the dress and style of living flaunted by the rich. Yet there are those who seem strangely puzzled that students should waste their money on semi-riotous living, show little sense of relative values, want to own cars, and passionately crave coonskin coats.

Sixth, this old American pioneer spirit, with its urge to explore, to conquer, to produce, to win in face of heavy handicaps, has not left us without a certain fine temper very much worth preserving. Offsetting some of the undesirable effects we have mentioned, it has given us as a people initiative, resourcefulness, persistence, esprit de corps, and the will-to-arrive. These traits held up before our boys and girls have inspired them to attempt the impossible—and often to accomplish it. Carried over into college life one finds it as the spur that brings many a student there and sees him through successfully even against heavy odds. One senses an atmosphere of expectancy and confidence in our

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students. Nothing they really want to do is too difficult for them. Some observers have called this easy optimism, but I am inclined to take issue with that judgment. To my mind it is one of the most hopeful facts in the college situation. For all that assurance and drive can be turned to unselfish and constructive ends. Perhaps this is what it means to be a true American.

2. Politics and Government

Developments in American politics and in administration of government have deeply impressed our national character in ways which are reflected in the life of our university and college people.

Inalienable rights to life, freedom, and the pursuit of happiness might be, when rightly interpreted, the basis of great and glorious national life. When selfishly interpreted such rights may be abused to the ruination of a people. When somebody takes unfair advantage, we respond by passing laws to control individual conduct in the interests of the whole. This worked well when our people were more homogeneous and thought more nearly together on what is right or wrong, desirable or undesirable. With the growth and accentuation of sectional differences as well as differences racial, religious and cultural in our citizenship the task of understanding aright any great American ideal and together carrying out its spirit became extremely difficult. The genius of democracy and of republican forms of government faded more and more.

Democracy came into contempt. Politics came under suspicion with the growing influence of big money. Someone was always seeking to control the legislatures in the interests of some special group. Much legislation is widely resented. It infringes on what someone has interpreted as his "inalienable rights." Law comes into disrepute. The mills of the courts grind slowly, but not exceedingly fine. Lawlessness and crime get out of hand and become the order of the day.

The campus inevitably feels the effects of such an atmosphere. Its pressure is felt in college politics and in attempts at student self-government. There is a restlessness under compulsion, a certain disrespect for rules and rule-makers. There is confusion as to the true bases of authority. Suspicion takes the place of confidence. There are too many axes to grind. However, in view of our general national situation, the wonder is that college students muddle through as well as they do.

3. Morals and Manners

Current magazines and novels keep us so graphically informed at this point, that I need only mention it to bring up the whole picture. Attack and defense of the younger generation still goes merrily on. All the social customs are under fire,—love, courtship, marriage; standards for women, standards for men, standards for children; manners of friendship, amusement, sport; Queen Victoria versus Paul Whiteman, catch as catch can.

My point is that all the rumpus was not started by the present younger generation, as if Satan had suddenly entered their hearts and set them running wild. If the whirlwind is playing pranks with them now, it is because the wind was sown some decades back.³ Judges, editors, and educators have about reached the conclusion that "what ails our youth" is their parents.

Again, this is no sentimental defense of students, only an attempt to see why they are where they are. Perhaps it is up to college people to lead us through the present transitional period to sane and appropriate standards. At present even the Christian student is not a little muddled and bowled over by a situation so complex, so chaotic.

4. Religious Reactions

The barometric pressure in American religious life directly affects the religious situation on our campuses. Look

³ Read "Our Dissolving Ethics" in the *Atlantic*, November, 1926.

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for a moment at the condition in our country as a whole. The chief weak points are:

- a. Only one-third of our people professing Christians of any sort; few adherents of any other religion.
- b. Washed out Protestantism having lost its deep sense of God, of worship, of sin, of spiritual reality.
- c. Medieval Catholicism difficult to reconcile with the constructions of the modern world.
- d. Weakening divisions and strife, especially the Liberal-Fundamentalist dispute.
- e. Relative loss of the religion of Jesus in the mass of "footnotes," leading to compromise with the unchristian elements in the status quo.

Some of the strong points are:

- a. The very recognition of the above weaknesses with a growing determination in some quarters to eliminate them.
- b. The spreading interest in the discussion of religion as evidenced in forum, newsstand and bookstall.
- c. The insistence that religion must not be divorced from the rest of life. Emphasis on the social implications of the Gospel.

Any campus inhabitant will recognize how the reactions of students to religion are reflecting such factors of strength and weakness in the religious life—or lack of it—out of which they have come. The frank facing of this total situation will prepare us to consider the special problems students face in their approach to religious experience.

II. STUDENTS ARE FACED WITH SPECIAL CONDITIONS

Having traced the large extent to which students find themselves for better or for worse molded to the image of

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average American society, it remains to call attention to certain features which are accentuated in student experience. Some factors would naturally be different because of students' age, their special viewpoint of preparation, and the peculiar elements encountered in the community life of universities and colleges.

1. Ambition is at a high-water mark. With the exception of the loafers, students are eager to get ahead and to excel in some direction. The goals may differ widely. One may be ambitious for almost anything, from honors in classroom and leadership in activities down to being the best dressed student on the campus. Most students are out on their own for the first time in their lives; they must swim and not sink, must make good and "succeed." If America measures success in terms of doing and dollars, then students will be out for both with a rush. There is an air of busyness on our campuses. Everyone's schedule seems crowded. Many students have told me their whole time would be quite profitably employed if there were no classes at all. The competition is rather keen. The life becomes hectic. Many things of recognized value are simply crowded out. To succeed in one line often means a too narrow concentration on that one interest. One may lose his soul trying so desperately to gain a little slice of the world.

It is the time of dreams and high hopes for the future, and this is good. It is just as well for a country to have a lot of young men and women around who see with fresh eyes and purpose with undaunted hearts. Of course there are the premature cynics, "all the sad young men" and women who affect a sneer at such things as dreams and high hopes, for whom life is burned out at twenty. My observation is that these are not in the majority, that for most students there is a great underlying urge to dream dreams—and make them come true. The problem for the student becomes how to keep his ambitions unselfish and how to give them legitimate reign without defeating his own highest aim.

2. Life-work is a dominating factor—to find what one is

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to do, and to get ready for it. For the technical and professional or graduate student it is assumed that the choice is already made. Even among them there is a large element of change and uncertainty. They are giving it a try. Hence a large percentage of our total national student-body knows not what it will do after leaving college. It hopes to find out in the process. This makes for a degree of aimlessness or anxiety in the college atmosphere. The large numbers who drop out of college after one or two years, either from failure or from change of occupational plans, bear witness to the uncertainty which exists.

It becomes apparent that between the narrow specialization of those whose vocation is chosen, and the unsettled shifting of those who do not know what they are going to do, almost everybody is in danger of being cheated out of great values which college ought to give. This is not a complaint. It is a partial explanation of what cramps the student's style or scatters his fire.

3. The educational system comes in for quite a bit of criticism. It is blamed for its antiquated teaching methods, for the system of cramming and "regurgitating" which it fosters, for its paternalism, for its insistence on external control of students, its failure to develop in them initiative, freedom and self-direction. Some of my undergraduate friends feel very keenly about this. They question how there can be a well-rounded development of Christian personality under the system which exists on most of our campuses. It may be encouraging to note that at least one hundred colleges are busy investigating these defects and planning experiments to remedy them; and that some twelve colleges and universities have enlisted the coöperation of the students themselves in conducting these investigations. Still the old order remains in the majority of schools, open to serious question as to what it is doing to the minds and characters of college folk.⁴

⁴Read "Fifteen Years Out"—a graduate looks at his classmates and his college. By Thomas Van Trees, in *Harpers* for October, 1926.

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4. Extra-curricular activities are much to the fore. Students often rank these as rich in educational value, furnishing, some of them say, fifty percent of their preparation for after life. Yet students themselves complain that their campuses are over-organized. The pendulum may have swung too far. It is astounding to see the full list of organizations on any of our larger campuses and all their demands upon the time and energy of students. Too often the burden is carried by a few. Pressure is brought to bear on the capable to go out for everything. Their academic work must suffer, of course. Sometimes lesser loyalties blind them to the larger loyalties of life. Many graduates looking back on their college careers can see this. But undergraduates are too often swept away by the flood.

5. Friendships come to be an all-absorbing issue. They make or break many a college career. Only a few students have discovered soon enough that popularity can be bought at too dear a price. Fraternities bulk large in the friendship situation. They often do a great bit of service in making possible closer friendships of a fine type. The fraternity system is open to charges of encouraging exclusiveness, accentuating shady campus politics, raising needless barriers, binding individuals to artificial rather than natural choices of friends, and hurting a lot of students keenly by leaving them out. A number of students have resigned from fraternities because they consider them unchristian. Yet no perfect plan as a substitute has been worked out. Increasing numbers of fraternity people are unhappy over the situation, but see no clear way out.

Abnormal friendships do their damage. Girls still develop "crushes," even in a day when their approach to boys is easier than it used to be. Tyranny—subservience relations are not uncommon. There is much unhappiness and heartbreak.

Coeducation is the rule in America now. It has the value of throwing men and women together in work relationships as well as in times of relaxation. There is a big problem in sex relations whether or not the institutions be coeduca-

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tional. The general breakdown of the old standards (some of which were none too good), the failure to arrive at any new standards which seem to work, the new freedom for women, the influences of the movies, the automobile, the hip-flask, some forms of jazzed-up dancing,—all these tend to complicate the situation, making it more difficult for men and women to have wholesome friendships.

Campus conventionalities play too large a part here. Every student feels that he or she must do what is being done. Both men and women make concessions to distasteful indecencies because they are afraid of being thought slow and dropped. There is bluffing on both sides. It requires more moral courage than one might think to break with the herd.

6. "A good time must be had by all." It is as if the college experience owed this to everyone. Youth is undoubtedly out for the thrills and doesn't intend to miss a single one of them. Excitement-eaters? Yes, if you like. I have already made it clear that they have no corner on this trait, but they do have a goodly share of it. The speed at which students live before and after reaching college, their social sophistication, leads to ennui. To be bored is unbearable, and everything regular becomes so boring. But brains and ingenuity will find the way out. Do not many students go to college to escape being bored at home? Then college must not fail them at that crucial point. They will see to that themselves.

No one should grudge students a good time. But more thoughtful students are beginning to ask themselves, What sort of a time is really a good time? What is the recipe for a good time that won't leave a "morning after" effect? What is the best cure for boredom after all?

7. Organized athletics add much to the gaiety of campuses. It is a marvelous benefit that the wide-scale development of outdoor and indoor sports has brought to America in the past thirty years. The colleges have been pioneers in this field and have set many fine standards. There is a decided move on at present to decentralize athletics,

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to get everyone into participation in sports. Many students and others fear that we are in danger of a disease called stadiumitis, with its intoxicating effect of the great spectacle, its commercializing of college sport, its throwing of athletics out of perspective in the total values of college life. This is a problem that students have it in their power to work out for themselves.

8. The college atmosphere creates special difficulties in the field of religion and the spiritual life. Some of these I have elaborated in a magazine article⁵ which is available to my present readers, so I shall not enlarge upon them here.

College students are at the age where one is naturally interested in working toward a philosophy of life for himself. Hence they are not naturally averse to the deeper contributions of genuine religious experience. Many have not distinguished between the outer forms and the inner reality. To them religion means going to church, saying a creed, repeating prayers, posing as righteous, believing a lot of fables, taking the joy out of life. An Oxford University student made the remark that youth has almost a corner on the spirit of worship, but is offended by what it sees in the churches. It is to the lasting discredit of organized religion that it has made this impression on college people.

Many students have been keen enough to sense that there is reality back of the scenes somewhere and to set out upon the search for it, not over-worried by the misrepresentations and shams exposed to view. They have made the distinction between *religion* on the one hand and any one of the *religions* on the other. In thinking about the Christian religion they are coming to distinguish between the religion of Jesus and our current Christianity. Jesus challenges them greatly, Christianity almost not at all.

The negative influence of some professors makes it difficult for students to maintain religious faith. Many of these professors were reared in obscurantist religious circles. Having become emancipated from that bondage they react by

⁵ "The Life of the Spirit," in the *Intercollegian* for November, 1926.

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slurring all religious concepts. This is unfortunate ignorance, but it makes its mark on youth. Other professors and the textbooks they use are openly committed to materialistic, positivistic, mechanistic, behavioristic constructions of life and experience which frankly leave no place for God and for spiritual interpretations of the universe and of human experience.

Professor A. N. Whitehead of Harvard, in his "Science and the Modern World," has shown the reaction that is under way. Science by the very perfection of its techniques is revealing the inadequacies of its earlier dogmatic assumptions and opening the door for reinterpretations upon which philosophy and religion have insisted right along. This news, however, has not leaked through to the average undergraduate who muddles through with the idea that there is some insuperable warfare between science and religion, making it impossible for an educated man to accept religion.

The present widespread discussion of the pros and cons of compulsory college chapel illustrates the points I am here making. To so many students chapel stands for religion, and religion is connected with forms, hypocrisies, outworn tenets, and unscientific viewpoints, which therefore are banal, futile and wearisome.

It will not do to say, then, that students are just a godless, irreverent crew, lacking a sense of sin, and aliens to the things of the Spirit. A student conference such as that at Evanston a year ago on "The Church" demonstrated the almost pathetic desire of students to have a hand in organized religious effort, with some drastic reconstructions and some splendid additions to our present set-up.

It may clear our thinking to recall that there is great diversity of type even among professing Christian students. This being true it becomes a problem for them to get together, really understand each other, and work together toward common goals. The National Student Conference to be held in Milwaukee this year should help at this point.

It is not easy to classify Christian students, but the fol-

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lowing types will be easily recognized and the reader may add to the list:

- a. The conventional, formal, unawakened type. May belong to either conservative or liberal group. Religious activities habitual but mean very little.
- b. The type that is strong on the old-time religion but asleep to the modern world. Enthusiast for piety, certain doctrines, the Bible, or his own church, but has not seen the implications of modern biology, psychology, and the rest. Probably not much interested in the application of religion to social issues such as war, industry and race.
- c. The modern but attenuated type. Has reconciled religion with modern knowledge, but religious concepts are pale and washed out. Has vaporized God, prayer, sin, salvation. Discusses religious problems earnestly and well, but gives little evidence of spiritual power in life.
- d. The radical on social issues to whom religion means doing something about what's wrong with the campus or the world, but who just doesn't see where God comes in, or prayer or sacramental worship.
- e. A better balanced type that grades high on intellectual reconstructions, has a vital life of fellowship with God, can mediate spiritual power to others, and manifests a wholesome interest in social readjustment in line with the ideals of Jesus.

It might be revealing to make a rough estimate of how many Christian students of any campus belong to each of these types. The reader might even try the classification upon himself, or work out a description that more accurately fits his own case.⁹

If my classification is at all complete, and if the first four

⁹ The writer would like to have you send him such descriptions, briefly put, and, if you prefer, unsigned. Address 347 Madison Ave., New York City.

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types together greatly outnumber the fifth, we can understand at once why campus Christianity is as washed out and powerless as it is, why it does not win more adherents, why it does not change the moral atmosphere more profoundly, why there is so often little difference between those called Christians and the others, why there is much individual moral breakdown and total loss of religious faith.

III. STUDENTS "BEHAVE LIKE HUMAN BEINGS"

The readers of Dorsey's recent book ⁷ will understand what I mean by this caption. In preparation for Milwaukee it might be quite worth your while to review at least the closing chapters of this current best-seller.

All of us have been more or less badly conditioned from birth, varied responses becoming habitual, molding our personalities; prejudices taken on rather blindly ⁸; imitation standardizing us more than we imagined.

A few paragraphs from Dorsey: "Why We Behave Like Human Beings," are so relevant that I quote them here:

"We are not mosaics of inherent reflexes and learned habits, but we are going concerns. How we go, how fast we go, and what we go in or out for, depend on the situation and our experiences with previous situations. 'We act in line with our training and in conformity with our inherited points of weakness and strength.' The situation we are in dominates us and releases one or the other of our all-powerful habit systems. . . . A cross-section of our habit-systems . . . gives us a picture of our personality" (p. 391).

"In estimating both our own and others' personality we have to reckon with emotions, instincts, memory, habits, sensation, age, experience, etc. These are variable factors. I am older to-day than I was yesterday; so much may have happened to me that I may not be the same person. Parents often suddenly realize that they do not know their own children" (p. 453).

⁷ G. A. Dorsey: "Why We Behave Like Human Beings." (Harper and Brothers, 1925.)

⁸ Read "Where Do We Get Our Prejudices," by R. L. Duffus, in *Harpers* for September, 1926.

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"Let us not forget that human beings do not come like buttons from a mold but in individual packages. There is probably a prize in every package, if we only looked for it or knew how to find it. These packages come with a limited repertoire of habits, an unlimited amount of emotion, and an enormous capacity to learn. Further, they are keen to learn: their very bodies itch for action—they could not have peopled the earth and enslaved nature otherwise. Further these little packages, in the natural process of becoming untied and budding like a rose or a sunflower as is their bent, become more and more tied up. With the result that by the time one is old enough to vote—whether it has learned what the ballot is or not—it belongs to mother's church and father's party, and wears the clothes, thinks the thoughts and swears by the flag the family and community have wished on it" (p. 462).

"Each age carried its loaded situation to which human beings responded in obedience to the impulse to live. Every age had its modes, norms, habits, opinions, manners, customs, taboos, and its written and unwritten codes of behavior. Mohammed born on Beacon Street would have gone to Harvard and been a Unitarian" (p. 467).

"Instinctive behavior is blown-in-the-bottle behavior; and of that kind of predestined, foreordained behavior man has less than any other animal. Man's really distinguishing trait is his capacity for modifiable behavior. Without that capacity he is a moron ape, and not too clever at that; with it he is man, ruler of the earth, creator of human culture and so-called civilization" (p. 417).

"It (our inherited equipment) cannot be wiped out, crushed or stifled; it can be warped, distorted, diseased, degraded. It can be encouraged to grow, to expand, to blossom, to bear fruit. It may produce an inspiring leader to show the way and be the way to bring a new order into the world of human affairs. Society may kill him. Never mind, Society will build a monument to him in admiration of his having dared to be a leader. The least we can do is to keep our hands off the courage of youth" (p. 475).

To all of this I would say Amen, but would go on to add the sort of thing I tried to say in the *Intercollegian* for November, 1926, under the title "The Life of the Spirit." Perhaps you will look that up to get at what I mean as to how the religious viewpoint fits in with but supplements the things Dorsey is saying.

IV. ARE STUDENTS IN REVOLT?

My answer offhand would be: Not as much as one might wish. Surely they are restless, even rebellious on certain issues, but these are relatively unimportant matters. There is some kicking over the traces on social conventionalities, enough to startle the mammas and perplex the dads. It is only minorities here and there that have singled out the bigger issues on which youth might really take a stand. For the most part students are unawake to the menacing factors in campus life and in our American civilization and give the impression of rocking contentedly along.

Those minorities, however, are both interesting and significant. Some of the students composing them are "young intellectuals" out to protest against the manifestations of Babbitry and stupid conformity of all sorts. Some are Christian students making themselves the foes of all that hurts and bruises human life at its best and so comes in clash with the ideals of Jesus. It is with this Christian group that I am here chiefly concerned.

They have set about the task of reexamining all institutions, customs, attitudes, and laws which regulate life, with the attempt to discover how much in them is good and suitable to modern-day life, and how much is outworn, senseless, cramping, unjust to the weak, unworthy of American civilization and false to the needs of humanity. None of the forces and trends which I mentioned in the earlier pages of this treatise have escaped the attention of some student group. In fact most of them were suggested to me in discussions with students.

Looking at institutions like the home, the college, the fraternity, the church, the state, they see how far each is from what it might be, from what it was meant to be; how external form has crowded out the inner spirit; how unworthy individuals have degraded them into tools for their own profit; how in their weakened condition they have come to rely overmuch on external control and authority backed

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by force of some kind; how their original ideals have been lowered by this general process.

These students for the most part have a strong sense of loyalty to these institutions which have nurtured them. They long to see them restored to their utmost fineness of quality and function. They consider that their loyalty demands protest against recognized evils, that defense of the status quo would be the real disloyalty.

Looking at human affairs they see that the greatest enemies of the Kingdom of God are greed, hate, selfishness, fear, and prejudice. They see these most menacingly manifest in militarism, industrial injustice, race prejudice, unfair discrimination, and corrupt politics. They see that these have their counterpart in campus life. They would break a lance against them wherever they exist.

What have these Christian "youth movers" actually done about it? What can they do? Well, they have gotten into the fray in ways wise or unwise both on campus issues and on some of the larger national and international problems. They have begun experimenting in the application of Jesus' law of love unreservedly to certain situations right at hand,—interracial relations, educational reforms, the R.O.T.C. and the war system, the church system, the fraternity system, relations between men and women, athletics and campus politics, the industrial situation.

As I look back over the past three or four years I seem to see Christian youth in three or four stages of this movement:

a. *The not-yet-started group.* Unfortunately this includes the vast majority of so-called Christian students. Some of them seem blissfully unconscious that there is anything that calls for a start. Others see the chance and the call, but for various reasons do nothing.

b. *The dash-for-freedom group.* These became acutely conscious of certain ills and tore loose to help remedy them. They took drastic action of a radical sort. Their idealism was fine and they set off in high spirits. Their methods were not always sane. They were perhaps more destructive than

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creative. They said what they would *not* do, and with real courage they did not do it. Thus they tackled the issues of war and race and campus iniquities. They did not get very far. They lacked something necessary to carry through or to make any dent on the situation. They rammed their heads into some rather solid stone walls and came to, feeling a bit groggy. They did not carry the confidence of their well-wishing older friends. They drew the contempt of the defenders of the existing order. The *Chicago Tribune* called them "juvenile squeaks." That hurt, but there was some truth in it.

c. *The back-to-the-roots stage.* This is represented by those who see that before they can hope to make any successful advance, they must prepare carefully by going back to the roots in at least two senses: (a) Down into a fuller understanding of the institution, system, or custom which they wish to change, lest its subtle difficulties and its powerful forces over ride them. (b) Back to the weighing of ideals and the tapping of spiritual forces far greater than they had possessed. Back to God, if you please. Back to the resources upon which men like Moses, Jeremiah, Jesus, Paul and Gandhi draw.

Many of the dash-for-freedom group awoke to the need of this preparation. And many others are drawn in on the reasonableness of this stage who never dashed for freedom because they saw something of the futility of that procedure.

Looking at this group, the casual observer might fail to recognize it as part of the Christian youth movement. It has "retired for strategic reasons" as the war bulletins used to say. It is studying and doing some thinking. Studying Jesus in the Gospels; studying economics, the new psychology, anthropology, sociology, and world issues. Experimenting too and getting some seasoning. It is a most hopeful stage.

For just this group the National Student Conference at Milwaukee is planned. It is true to say that the Conference was planned largely *by* this group. It is part of their program. It is a back-to-the-roots conference. It should be

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judged on the basis of whether it meets such needs as I mentioned above, (a) and (b), not on the basis of whether it draws up brave and radical resolutions on the closing day.

d. *The new-advance stage.* Wherein, having undergirded with resources of understanding, power, and love, students steadily but quietly set about to bring in the changes needed, to create the new and substitute it for the old. Not many students in this stage yet, but enough to give us an earnest of what might happen if their tribe increased. The Milwaukee Conference should aid in increasing the numbers and the quality of this group.

I suggest that the delegation from your college try classifying themselves according to the four stages I have mentioned. Notice that students from any one of the four stages may conceivably profit from the Milwaukee Conference, even the "not-yet-started." If you strike another classification work it out and pass it on to me.

IN CONCLUSION

It is only fair to express confidence in American students, that no matter where they are and why, they have it in them to make a unique contribution in bringing themselves and all of us to the place to which the dreams of humanity beckon us and to which the ideals of Christianity call us. A student said, "How can one know American students at all well and yet believe in them?" The answer is, "We believe in the minorities who elect themselves under God to understand and meet the needs of humanity."

Note: If the best use of this survey is to be made in definite preparation for Milwaukee, the following suggestions should be followed:

1. Check back over this survey, underscoring what you think most important, questioning what you think untrue, unfair or unimportant.

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2. If this survey stimulates questions you think Milwaukee should help to answer, jot them down for use there.
3. Read the articles suggested on pp. 9, 12, 15, 18.
4. Write out and send in early the sort of things suggested on pp. 17, 23.

The State of Our Religion

BY REINHOLD NIEBUHR¹

Whether we look directly at the facts and tendencies of modern civilization or view them through the mirror of the college campus we are forced to confess that spiritual interests are greatly imperiled and religious convictions seriously tested by the atmosphere in which we live. Religion is obviously not in a robust state of health in our day. Not only its enemies but some of its rather distant friends believe it to be dying. The facts may not warrant such a judgment or prophecy. History is patient in her processes and is sometimes as slow to revive what seems to be dead as to bury what has died. Yet it is obvious that the religious life of modern men is not healthy. Our religious convictions are not perfectly adjusted to our scientific world view and our traditional religious attitudes do not fit our most urgent moral needs.

What Has Happened to Our Religion

To the average collegian the intellectual difficulties of any consistent religious world view seem most important. It may well be doubted whether they really are most important. The modern apostasy is probably more attributable to the ethical than to the intellectual maladjustment of religion. Yet intellectual difficulties are important. Religion is basi-

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cally the defense of personality and of personal values in a seemingly impersonal world. Religion insists that human personality is eternally significant and that its significance is guaranteed not only by its own intrinsic worth but by certain factors in the universe itself which are related and sympathetic to human personality. In view of the blindness of the natural world to many of the values in his life which man treasures most this has never been an easy faith to maintain. The task of maintaining it has been measurably complicated by the advance of the physical sciences. When men insist that the universe itself must be ultimately personal or under the dominion of a personal and creative will they mean by that there must be areas of freedom in the world; for only where there is freedom can there be intelligent and ethical creativity. The freedom of God was once assumed. God was, in fact, assumed to be not only free but capricious in his actions. The physical sciences have undoubtedly destroyed all traditional conceptions of God's freedom and omnipotence. They have revealed a God bound to definite laws, or at least, they have revealed the process of creation proceeding through such close links of cause and effect that it became difficult to discover the area where a free intelligence could intervene to determine the course of the process. It is hardly scientific to draw the conclusion from this fact that the idea of freedom has been invalidated. Yet it was inevitable that this conclusion should be very generally drawn if for no other reason than that men were tempted psychologically to react against the overemphasis upon divine freedom and omnipotence in traditional religious conceptions. The protest which traditional champions of religion uttered against the theory of evolution was prompted by two considerations and it is difficult to say which was the dominant one. On the one hand it seemed to imperil the traditional evaluation of human personality by its proof of man's kinship to the brute. On the other hand it did definitely restrict the area of freedom in the universe itself which men had regarded as the guarantee of the significance of human personality. It is interesting to note that both con-

siderations come finally to the same thing. Whether it is divine omnipotence or human uniqueness that was threatened, traditional religion had the values of personality bound up in them and was prompted by its instinct to defend personality to fly to the defense of its traditional concepts. The intellectual problems arising from the advance of the physical sciences are not yet solved but modern religion was on the way to solving them when a new peril arose from the psychological sciences. It is probably safe to say that if modern collegians have theological difficulties, if they discover their faith imperiled by science, it is usually not by biological but by psychological science, which is challenging the idea of human freedom, much as biology challenged the idea of divine freedom. This is particularly true in America where the theories of behaviorism are much more generally accepted than in Europe. Ten years ago students were wondering whether there was anything in the universe to guarantee the spiritual evaluation of human personality. Now their concern is whether the idea of an ethical personality is itself valid. It may be added that economic determinism is a further threat to the whole ethical and spiritual interpretation of life. Not only man's private life but his social actions when subjected to close scrutiny reveal less freedom and therefore less conscience than we have traditionally assumed.

It is difficult to prophesy just what will be the final outcome of all these tendencies. Yet two facts seem fairly certain. One is that we have a right to discount much of modern determinism as an emotional and psychological reaction rather than a scientifically established thesis. When the scientist discovers so much mechanism where freedom had once been assumed it is inevitable that he should draw the conclusion that all concepts of freedom have been invalidated. But the conclusion is as erroneous as it is inevitable and we may trust the philosopher, who has been temporarily defeated by the very wealth of fact which science has thrown at his feet for integration, to give us finally a total view of things in which it will be proven that absolute

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mechanism is as incapable of explaining all the facts as absolute freedom. Professor A. N. Whitehead in his "Science and the Modern World" and "Religion in the Making," clearly indicates the trend which modern philosophy is bound to take in correcting the overemphasis of modern science. There is no reason to suppose that an ethical and religious world view will be finally imperiled by scientific facts. The other fact is that the idea of freedom is without doubt permanently restricted and every religious world view and ethical life view must be adjusted to that fact. There are vast areas of the universe which show no immediate sympathy for man's dreams and aspirations. The good will which a Christian believes to be at the heart of the universe is not as obvious in every circumstance nor as triumphant in every incident as traditional faith has assumed. To accept this fact will do much to solve the problem of evil which has been the perennial nemesis of religion; but there must be a great deal of adjustment in religious thinking before this can be done. The miracle, "the dearest child of faith," will no doubt be sacrificed, as it has been sacrificed in the thought of many modern Christians. In the words of Studdert Kennedy the whole adjustment will result in a faith which believes in a God "not less good than Jesus." In the field of ethical thought and moral conduct the adjustment is even more important. We have undoubtedly overestimated man's freedom and therefore misunderstood his ethical problems. He is more seriously determined in his conduct by his environment and his circumstances than we had believed. The only chance of making life ethical lies in an acceptance of the dismal fact that it is not as ethical as we had imagined. If we come to a realization of this fact without too much hesitation and adjust the spiritual efforts of men to it, it will be possible to overcome much of the ethical impotence which now characterizes religious life.

Our Modern Civilization

The fact is, as previously intimated, that religious faith is much more seriously challenged by social facts than by scientific theories. It is not so much an impersonal nature, discovered by pure science, as an impersonal civilization created by applied science, which imperils the religious estimate of human personality. We are living in a predominantly urban industrial world. In this world human beings are increasingly becoming the slaves of machines and the victims of the vast secular purposes of nations. We have a civilization which through popular education has more and more emancipated man from the mob and given him the pride and power of his own opinions. Yet that same civilization debases his life and reduces it to insignificance. In the great urban complexes in which he lives personal relationships are destroyed. In the industrial plants in which he works creative satisfactions have been reduced to a minimum or totally destroyed. His home life, once the sanctuary of personal values, is imperiled by a hundred foes. It is no longer either as stable or as significant as it was. The purposes and intentions of his nation, for which it periodically demands the sacrifice of his treasure and his life, may not be less ethical than those of ancient nations but the greed which informs them is more clearly revealed and more brazenly confessed. It is clear that no spiritual values can thrive in such an atmosphere. Religion is in many respects not the root but the fruit of moral living. Man can build his hopes only upon realities, however imperfect they may be. He cannot believe in the final triumph of love if he has not tasted love in some form. He cannot pray for the victory of righteousness if he has not come in contact with some noble action. He cannot dream of beauty enthroned if his life is vulgar.

Modern civilization affects the spiritual life of men in two ways according to their circumstance. There is one class, a comparatively small class, of men who do not

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suffer greatly from the moral limitations of modern life and who benefit greatly from its mechanical achievements. They hold the power as it is centralized by modern industry, and they garner the privileges which power guarantees. Life seems quite pleasant to them. They express their satisfaction in their religion. Religion is in danger of being appropriated and monopolized by them. While the peasant and the rustic maintains religion in its traditional forms, the modern urbanite is too sophisticated for that. His religion expresses itself in terms more or less perfectly adjusted to modern science. He sees the threat to personal values in an impersonal nature but he does not experience the threat of an impersonal civilization. His religion therefore tends to become a sublimation of his very selfishness. It guarantees the value of his personality but it does not force him to think of his fellowmen in terms of a religious appreciation of personality. Frequently it actually serves to obscure from his own conscience and from the gaze of his fellows the essentially unmoral character of his social actions. While he imagines his religion very modern it is very traditional in this, that it fights the age-old battle of personality against nature and fails to defend personality against its foes in society.

The other class, the great class of manual toilers, is affected quite differently by contemporary civilization. It is vaguely dissatisfied. Sometimes it is unable to articulate its grievances and they are revealed in a sullen but inarticulate mood. Sometimes, as in Europe, this mood becomes articulate in a cynical spirit of rebellion against civilization and all its traditional institutions. Sometimes, as in America, where industry has robbed the worker of personality but not forced him into abject poverty, he sinks into vulgar complacency that is incapable of even the heroism of rebellion. But whether dimly or clearly this whole vast mass of men is beginning to understand the essentially unethical nature of the driving forces in modern life. Inevitably their spirit is corrupted by a cynicism which laughs at the whole idea of a moral life and sees the only hope for mankind in

a reconstruction of society presaged upon the assumption that men are not moral and that self-interest is the only spring of their actions. Their cynicism is increased by the very religion of those whom they regard, either dimly or clearly, as their social enemies. There is a certain by-product of hypocrisy in all religion; for the claims which it makes for man are so high that specific circumstances never justify them. This hypocrisy is tremendously increased by the wide implications of the social actions of those whose power is great and not under sufficient ethical restraint. Thus the very ethical impotence of the religion of the favored classes serves to aggravate the cynicism of the underprivileged. They learn to pour scorn upon God as they have learned to distrust men.

There is no philosophy to destroy this cynicism. The most skillful apologetics is powerless against it; for too many facts are in its favor. It can be overcome only by changing the facts. We cannot prove spiritual hopes valid if we cannot make ethical ideals real. The only hope of building an ethical civilization lies in freeing the forces which are charged with that duty of their inhibitions and traditional weaknesses. Religion is not now an important factor in moralizing social relationships. Whatever decencies it may still develop in individual lives will not save it, nor civilization, if we cannot make civilization itself in some degree ethical. That is a formidable task but not an impossible one. If it seems impossible it need only be remembered that civilization has not always been as emancipated from ethical restraint as it now is, nor has religion always been as socially impotent. We have simply been caught in a situation in which man was endowed with undreamed of power at the very time when his conscience was most confused and the forces which support his conscience most devitalized.

The Shortcomings of Religion

The first lesson which those who are interested in the religious ideal must learn is that already suggested by science. It is that man is not as ethical as he has imagined himself to be. There is a very marked overestimation of human virtue in the churches, which gives all their reactions to modern life a note of sentimentality. The church does not seem to know how difficult the attainment of the kingdom of God will be; how natural attitudes and instinctive behaviors of the average man defy every dream of a kingdom of God in which men will have learned to live together in free co-operation. It is a rather curious fact that religion renounced the idea of "original sin" just when science began to justify it. That is, just when science was tempted to take a pessimistic view of human nature, religion insisted on a very optimistic one. As a result it has not been the church which has called our generation to repentance for the major social sins. The church did not see the real facts in regard to the World War as some economic realists saw them. While the church is very critical of war to-day, after the great war revealed the full horror of armed physical conflict, there is no indication that the church really knows what is involved in the elimination of war. It does not see the brutal realities of the economic struggle in which the nations are engaged. In America the church is doing practically nothing to teach the average American how dangerous to the peace of the world American pride and power are becoming. It is doing a little but not much more to destroy the race hatred which resides in every Nordic heart and which will finally imperil our relations with the Orient. Of course a religion which can only see the fruits of sin and not its roots is more or less useless. We ought not to take for granted however that the easy optimism which characterizes contemporary religion is its permanent tendency. Religion at its best does sensitize the conscience and discovers to men's blind eyes hitherto tolerated vices. If religion in our day

has not been exercising the function of encouraging men to repentance it has been partly due to its reaction against the extreme pessimism of the middle ages. Discovering the fallacy of the medieval conception of original sin, the modern church set up a dogma of progress, of almost automatic progress, as fallacious as the idea of human depravity. What we need among young Christians to-day, and it ought not to be impossible of achievement, is an attitude of wholesome realism which cannot be taken in by either a romantic optimism or a cynical pessimism. Human beings are not so far removed from the stone age as they had imagined but they are making progress and there is no reason why, after we know all the facts, we should lose hope in them. But to hope without knowing all the facts is to mix illusion with hope. It is not impossible to overcome the fatuous optimism with which religion has become enmeshed. It is one of the tasks to which men of good will and ethical insight must apply themselves.

There is another reason why religion has not been functioning as a conscience of mankind in the difficult social problems which modern man faces. Modern religion, which for our immediate purposes means Protestant Christianity, developed at a time in history when men were anxious to destroy the old feudal as well as international restraints which rested upon individual men as well as upon nations. The medieval world was closely knit with every relationship political and economic under some kind of ecclesiastic restraint. Protestantism arrived simultaneously, partly cause and partly effect, with the rebellion of the individual against society. It therefore had a strong emphasis upon the idea of freedom and less emphasis upon the virtues of co-operation. It emphasized the individual virtues which would help a man to emancipate himself from the tyranny of the crowd and stand on his own feet. It bred a race of men who imagined themselves complete Christians if they were temperate, continent, diligent and thrifty. The medieval restraints upon greed and avarice were completely destroyed by this emphasis. As a result we have a Christian

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conscience which does not function in the intricate problems of modern economic life. Modern life is unethical partly because it is too complex for any ethical formula to comprehend its intricacies easily. Any kind of religious and ethical idealism would probably have required several centuries to bring the complex relationships of an industrial civilization under ethical control. Yet Protestant ethics with its peculiar traditions was particularly unsuited for the task of guiding the consciences of men in this age. It placed too little emphasis upon the social virtues and was too uncritical of the virtues which helped a man to live his own life, emancipated from the crowd. It thus became a kind of religious sublimation for the new type of supermen, the economic and industrial overlords, who now rule society. It may be well to point out that the vices of a morally autonomous nationalism are as intimately related to Protestant life as the limitations of a morally autonomous industry. The Reformation destroyed the international restraint upon nations as well as upon business enterprise and nations became as insistent as individuals that they had a right to live their own lives without regard to their obligations to others. But nations and individuals do not see that the right to live your own life easily degenerates into the right to live other peoples' and other nations' lives for them. We have simply been immersed in an individualism which is not suited to instruct the conscience of a civilization in which nations and individuals are bound together in a more intimate unity than the world has ever before known. We will escape this individualism not by returning to ancient forms of coercion and autocracy. The weaknesses which came out of the Protestant Reformation may have been inevitable. It may be inevitable that a period of confusion must follow the day when coerced coöperation is destroyed. But this confusion must finally give way to a free and morally ordered coöperation between men and nations.

Professor Whitehead makes the interesting observation that our present moral confusion is partly due to Protestantism's oversimplification of ethics. This may be only an

other way of saying what we have already said. Any individual ethics is too simple for a social age. But the ethics of the modern church has been oversimplified beyond its individualism. It assumed that people were either good or bad, bad before their conversion and good after it. It was, based on the belief that the moral good will which issues out of the religious experience would apply itself automatically to the world's problems. It did not realize that people may be very moral in one relationship and very immoral in another; that it is therefore necessary to develop a conscience for each moral problem. If a man has been intemperate and learns to master his appetites through the power of his religion it does not follow that he will know how to be spiritual and ethical in his relations to men in his employ. Nor does it follow that he will know how to bring a sensitive conscience to bear upon the problems of his nation. Part of the cynicism of our day is due to the discovery that pious men can be very unethical. If the cynic draws the conclusion from such a phenomenon that piety has nothing to do with ethics, he is, however, very much mistaken. He has simply discovered a victim of an oversimplified ethics. By the right kind of moral and religious training it ought to be possible to prompt men to moral action in relationships which have hitherto been free of moral control. Wherever we trust religious good will to function without intelligent guidance it will inevitably apply itself to some very simple moral problem, where application is more or less automatic, and be applied nowhere else. There is a tendency to sacrifice all confidence in the ethical potency of religion as soon as this admission is made. That is simply a sign of intellectual immaturity. Men want to believe in all or nothing. Either religion is a magical panacea for all ills or all confidence in it is lost. We must learn to treat the major interests of men as we must learn to treat men. We must know how to be critical of their limitations without losing confidence in them.

Perhaps one further difficulty which men will encounter as they seek to make religion potent for the creation of a

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better world ought to be mentioned. Religion has a deep instinct for persuading men to seek their happiness in the inner kingdom of their soul in defiance of external circumstances. It teaches them to "be not anxious for to-morrow." It asks them to learn to be content whether they are abased or whether they abound. In short it helps them to transcend life's fortunes. That is a very noble quality in the life of faith but also a very dangerous one. It is particularly dangerous in an age in which men suffer from many social ills from which they might be emancipated by taking thought. It is the characteristic of religion which persuades cynics that all religion is otherworldly and that it deals with the proper way of dying rather than the right way of living. That is rather too simple an explanation. The fact is that our western world might well absorb a little more of this message of true religion, that "life consisteth not in the abundance of things a man possesseth" and that it may be possible to be happy even when we are not comfortable or physically healthy. Yet this note in the religious message easily lends itself to abuse and tempts religion into antisocial attitudes. When faced with the immutabilities of nature it is a more serviceable note than when man suffers from the ills which are inflicted upon him by the cruelty or indifference of his fellowmen. It is therefore necessary that all spiritually minded people who are intent upon building a better world keep a close watch upon this characteristic of faith, lest it betray them into premature contentments, and lest it be used to justify social conditions which ought to be changed.

Looking Toward a Way Out

It is not to be assumed that the task of building an ethical civilization depends altogether upon the reconstruction and the readjustment of religion to modern life and its ethical needs. There may be an ethical life without religion. But it may well be doubted whether men of conscience will

finally have either enough courage or enough imagination without the resources which religion supplies. To attempt to build an ethical civilization without a profound conviction that the universe itself guarantees the ultimate preservation of spiritual values usually means that the attempt will issue in despair. To try to build a world in which human beings will trust and love one another without a profound and religious insight into the essential beauty of human nature and without the will to trust people even beyond their immediate capacity to justify such trust means final defeat. What is needed is a robust faith which can maintain itself even after the worst is known. To build a kingdom of God on earth is no easy task. The chief foes of the enterprise are those who think the task easy and those who think it impossible. Only a genuine religious faith, stripped of sentimentality but not delivered into the hands of pessimism, can finally accomplish the task. That is essentially the faith of Jesus, who saw the vision of the kingdom of God but knew that there was a cross for those who followed the vision.

Modern Thought and the Faith of Christ

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Formal and consciously formulated atheism is scarcely ever real atheism. It is generally the worship of some neglected aspect of God in mistake for the whole of Him. Professing atheists are often religious people, protesting against some caricature of God which they suppose, or have been taught, is His reality. Real atheism, which is either sin or nervous disease, may be ready to acknowledge that there must be a God, but denies that He is or can be known by man. A passionate blasphemer is often as near to the Kingdom of God as Saul the persecutor was to Paul the prophet, when he witnessed the stoning of Stephen. He blasphemes because he half believes.

Real atheism denies that there is any rational purpose in life which men can enter into and understand. This denial, if it be persisted in, means the death of the human soul. It lies at the root of all sin. For the man who denies that

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life has a purpose of its own there is nothing left but to invent a purpose for life. This is what he inevitably does. He takes the world and tries to make it serve his purpose and submit to his will. Since he cannot know God, he worships the only God he can know, which is himself, and the inevitable result of this idolatry is disillusion and despair, and the greater the man is the more awful is the tragedy. The supreme example, perhaps, is Napoleon, whose uniquely powerful natural genius enabled him to blast, pound, tear, and torture the world in order to shape it to his will, only to find that it would not bend, but that he must break, and listen at last to the judgment of the sea as it cried against the cliffs of St. Helena. The world is full of Napoleons, only different because they are so puny and so small, scheming, planning, twisting and torturing the world in a million futile blundering ways to make it serve their little human ends, until their natural force abates, and life throws them aside to grumble and to die. That is the monotonous miserable story of a million million lives, and its constant repetition is the most searching challenge to faith in God of which I know. A challenge and yet a confirmation, for it does proclaim and reproclaim the necessity of God, a God who can be known and loved, with whom we can, in however small a way, coöperate, becoming in St. Paul's audacious phrase, "fellow-workers with Him," and so finding life.

The Modern Outlook

The growth of modern knowledge has, in many subtle ways, strengthened the temptation to that real atheism which denies that God can be known, or the purpose of life in any real sense be understood by man.

Science has revealed to us the vast infinities of space and time, and added so much to the immensities of the universe that our minds reel back amazed and afraid. We cry out, with a new fear that perhaps there is no one to hear our cry, "What is man that Thou should'st be mindful of him

or the Son of Man that Thou should'st visit him at all." Moreover, not only has our conception of the universe become greater, but life in it has become more complex. Not merely is the individual daunted, cowed, and baffled by the gigantic spectacle of nature, as science reveals it to him, but he is swallowed up in the multitude of our teeming populations, and bewildered by the intricate network of human relationships in which he must become entangled if he is to live at all. The temptation to give it all up as a bad job is tremendous. It comes in all sorts of guises. It borrows the raiment of humility and appears as a prophet denouncing human pride. What can we ridiculous creatures who crawl about on the surface of a minor planet set for a time in the timeless and spaceless eternity of things, know about the meaning and purpose of creation? It is only our presumption, and fatuous conceit that deceives us into supposing that we know, or can ever know, the meaning of it all. Do not common honesty, reasonable reverence, and proper humility demand from us a frank acknowledgement that it is utterly above and beyond us, that we neither know nor can know anything as to its ultimate meaning and purpose?

This attitude, moreover, appeals to the natural sloth which is in us all. Sir Almroth Wright has said that "a pain in the mind is the prelude to all discovery," and it is certain that we never think or strive to solve a problem unless it hurts us to leave it unsolved, and many of us will not move unless the unsolved problem hurts us very badly. We need a pain and a very sharp pain, either in the mind or somewhere else, before we are willing to face the effort of thought. If we can by any means soothe the pain, and, as we say, "set our minds at rest" without thought, there is for all of us a strong temptation to do it. Of course, thinking, praying, and seeking are great joys—the greatest of joys—to some men and women, just as climbing mountains, swimming channels, rowing races are joys to many; but even they must either keep themselves in constant training, or find a stimulus to drive them to the effort. If, in addition to this great advantage of peace without pain, agnosticism

affords us the satisfaction of conscious superiority over those who are fools enough to assert that God can be known, and we can have the pleasure of displaying our deeper wisdom, the cycle of its powerful attractions is complete.

Come unto me, says the Unknown and Unknowable God, and I will give you rest, sleep, and entire self-satisfaction. What more could any man want? And yet we do want more. We want life and love, and power to heal the wounds of our humanity. And these the Unknown God has not to give. If we can shut our ears to the voice of mankind, and remain blind to their signals of distress; if we can content ourselves with the book of life before us, written in a language which we cannot read, and make no attempt to learn the language, we may indeed die gracefully and harmlessly, but we cannot hope to live. For my part I cannot do it.

I want to live, live out, not wobble through
My life somehow, then out into the dark.
I must have God. This life's too dull without,
Too dull for aught but suicide. What's Man
To live for else? I'd murder someone just
To see red blood. I'd drink myself blind drunk
And see blue snakes, if I could not look up
To see blue skies, and hear God speaking through
The silence of the stars.

You might not, gentle reader, be so base as that. You may be much more civilized, and it may seem to you to be extravagant, but I am a primitive, vulgar man, and I would take either to drink, sensuality, or crude personal ambition. You, perhaps, would be content with more refined and decent drugs, modern novels, problem plays, scandal, bridge, mild gambling, and all the proper apparatus we clever people use to dull the pain of boredom and the emptiness of life. You would not murder anyone, but you might crush to see a murderer tried for his life, or help to absorb the ocean of evening papers which enable us to enjoy a murder without the blood and tears. I would want the blood and tears, the other turns me sick. I cannot stand the civilized methods of

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being savage. Savagery or sanctity I could do with, but from the modern cave man with his morbid and dishonest sensuality may the Good Lord deliver me. I must have God, a God whom I can know, and love, and live for, I must find a meaning for life.

The Pathway to Truth

If I am to do that I must think. How does one begin? Well, it begins with trouble in the mind. We have seen that. There is no thought without tears. "Blessed are they that mourn." "The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit." The modern cult of cheeriness is largely due to the fact that we are deadly afraid of being sad. We want Easter without Lent. But we cannot have it. The human mind, and the human heart—and you cannot separate the one from the other—God has joined them together and no man can put them asunder.

There's no such thing as thought which does not feel,
If it be real thought, and not thought's ghost
All pale and sicklied o'er with dead conventions,
Abstract truth, which is a lie upon this
Living, loving, suffering Truth which pleads
And pulses in my very veins. The blue
Blood of all beauty and the breath of life itself.

The human mind and the human heart move to truth through trouble. It does not really matter what sort of truth you seek. Bunyan faced with the problem of the soul, and Newton faced with the problem of the stars, are both alike in this; they are troubled spirits. They brood over a mass of apparently unconnected, unrelated, and meaningless facts. Bunyan mutters, "There is no health in me;" Newton mutters, "There is no sense in them." For both it is dark, and they do not know the way. Both walk at times into the dungeon of despair. The pilgrim's progress of the scientist and of the saint is made along much the same road, and it begins with a troubled brooding, and a heavy burden

at the back of the heart and mind. We must all start there. Life begins in Lent. But there comes to both a supreme and splendid moment, the moment when they cry, "I see! I see!" Bunyan sees a Cross and a Man who hangs in agony upon it. Newton sees an apple falling to the ground. But into the mind of both there comes a blaze of light. For the scientist it is the formation of a great hypothesis, for the saint it is the vision of a Savior. But the difference between those two great events is not so wide as many would suppose. They are but two different ways in which the WORD, the person eternally expressing a reasonable purpose, reveals himself to the heart and mind of man. For both the scientist and the saint it means the coming of order into chaos. It is the perception of sense in what had been nonsense, of reason in what had seemed mad.

For both, there remains the task of walking in the light which they have seen. The scientist must apply and verify his hypothesis, the saint must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. From the purely intellectual point of view, if there were such a thing in any but abstract questions, such as those with which pure science is concerned, from the purely intellectual point of view our faith is the great hypothesis, and our intellectual right to hold it is the same as that of the scientist to work upon and verify his hypothesis. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of hypotheses to thought. They are the bones of science. There is no science until there is an hypothesis, a great assumption, on its trial; there is no science and no life, either. Thought and life must both begin with an act of faith. Both are born from that great moment in the pilgrim life, when a man cries out, "I see." The full meaning and application of what they see, the extension of their vision until it covers all the facts and gives a meaning to them, is in both cases the work of a lifetime. As they work new vision comes, and they may perceive that their first vision was not clear, that there is more to learn, and they must modify their early faith.

Religious people often scoff at the scientist because they

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say he is always changing his faith, and scientific people scoff at the religious because they never change theirs. Neither taunt is really true. It is not true that because Einstein modifies Newton therefore Newton did not see a great Truth, or that because the Darwinian hypothesis of natural selection has been found inadequate that therefore it is not true in essence. Nor is it true that religious people never change or modify their faith, they are always doing it, that is the work of the theologians. St. Augustine and Bishop Gore have both seen Christ, but what they have seen in Christ is as different in many ways as the tropics from the poles.

The Christian Faith in Essence

The Christian does not claim to know God in all the truth of His infinite Being, the claim would be manifestly absurd. Omnia abeunt in mysterium. There are depths of Truth which lie beyond us, and we bow in humility before the "mysterium tremendum" of the Father. The cheerful pantheism which is, or claims to be, on intimate and familiar terms with God, which is, so to speak, hail fellow well met with Him; the religion which does not kneel, but presumes on Love revealed in Christ, to treat God almost as an equal, is a dangerous travesty of Truth. It is a reaction from the opposite danger of the unknown and unknowable God before whose veiled face men have bowed down in fear and trembling, placating Him with servile prayers, and propitiating His irrational wrath with morbid sacrifices, and it is as far from truth as most reactions are.

The Christian claim is that God is unknown in the Infinity of the Father, well-known in the Incarnation of the Son, and infinitely knowable by the operation of the Spirit. We do not claim to know God face to face, and in His fullness; but we do claim, and claim emphatically, that through Jesus Christ, we are growing in true knowledge of Him. We do claim that whatever new knowledge of God comes to

us, either as a race or as individuals, whether it comes through science or through history, will never contradict Christ. In Christ the meaning of Life is being revealed. We only see things truly as we see them all in Him. His will and His purpose are the will and the purpose of all things, and only as we use all things in accordance with His will, and for His purpose, do we use them rightly. His purpose and not our purposes. His will and not our wills. That is the essential point. If we try to take the world and mold it to our wills, and make it conform to our purposes, it will break us in pieces. It will break our hearts, and burst our brains. The world is not yours—but God's; it is not made to serve your purpose but to serve the purpose of God revealed in Christ.

That is the very essence of the Christian faith. That is the awful truth which we proclaim in the dogma of the Divinity or Deity of Christ. The reason why we reject, and must reject, the conception of the merely human Jesus, even though he be acknowledged as the greatest of all teachers, is because if that be true we are still without light upon the ultimate meaning and purpose of life and of the world in which we live. We have a system of ethics but not a religion, a moral code but not a vital faith. We cannot be saved by a moral code. We can only be saved as we learn to live in accordance with our real environment, like any other living creature. There is no escape from the everlasting law of selection. We must either correspond with our environment or perish, and unless we can know the true nature of our environment we cannot correspond to it. If Christ does not reveal to us the nature of reality we must find someone who does. If the Christian values are not the true values, we must discover what the true values are, or we cannot live. Our supreme hypothesis is that in Christ we have revealed to us the ultimate nature of our environment, the true meaning, value and purpose of life, and we cannot abandon it unless, and until, we find a better one.

A great psychologist, Dr. Hadfield, recently expressed a doubt as to whether Christianity was the final religion. If

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by that he means to question whether Christ as we see Him now, and as we interpret Him now, is the final Christ, I am sure that he is right; but if he means that we shall ever discover Goodness, Beauty, and Truth which contradict the Goodness, Beauty, and Truth revealed in that Life and Death, I am sure he is wrong.

I am convinced that, as through evolution in time the true nature and meaning of the world in which we live is progressively revealed to us, so it will become more and more evident that we can only live in it as we conform to the Christian standard, and attain to the Christian virtues. God leads us to Christ not only through teachers, preachers, and prophets, but through life and through history. If the coming of the Kingdom of God depended solely upon the moral leaders of mankind, I would despair of it; but the purpose of God revealed in Christ is being worked out in the world, and in the history of the world.

We are being led to the Truth through the continual pressure upon us of our environment, which has *inherent in it* the purpose of God. The doctrine of the "survival of the fittest," adequately interpreted and properly understood, is ultimate truth. The "fittest" means those who most completely fit in with and correspond to their environment. But the ultimate environment of man is God "in Whom we live and move, and have our being." Those, therefore, are "the fittest," and those alone can in the end survive, who fit in with, are in communion with, God. "This is eternal life—to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent."

The doctrine of the survival of the fittest, which was put forward merely as a bald summary statement of ascertained fact, namely, that those animals tended to survive and propagate their species most plentifully which were best adapted to their material surroundings, has been used to lend the authority of "science" to the most perverse and ignorantly conceived philosophic ideas. It has been used to interpret human life in terms of animal life, and to depict the world as being in its ultimate nature, a brutal battlefield. This

teaching it is to which Christianity is utterly and irrevocably opposed. The ultimate nature of the world was revealed to man in Christ as being, not a battlefield, but a home, and its final law as being, not the law of the jungle, but the law of the family.

Let us be quite clear about the importance of that Truth. Once men really grasp the meaning of it, it will turn the world upside down, or rather, right way up. It means that if we try to use the material world as though it belonged to us, to use as we think fit, to serve our will, *every single blessing in it will become a curse*. From that terrible fact there is no escape for us either as individuals or as societies. No intellectual brilliance, or perfection of organization, no human scheming, however subtle, can enable us to subdue the world of things to our human will. We may appear to succeed for a while, but in the end we must fail and fail disastrously. We must fail because "right at the heart of the ultimate reality there was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be a person expressing a rational purpose which we can understand," and it is this purpose which finally controls and determines our destiny because its nature is divine. We cannot know God in His fullness but He has spoken, and is speaking, and revealing to us the meaning of the world in which we live, and only as we learn to hear Him speak, and to obey His will, can we attain to life in any real sense at all. There is no such thing as success outside the will of God, either for individuals or societies.

There is no failure so ghastly as selfish and merely personal success. Whether it be the success of the businessman who gains riches and misses wealth, the success of the man in the street who wins pleasure and loses happiness, of the statesman who attains to power but fails to serve, of the beautiful woman who is universally admired but never loved—it is all failure, ugly, vulgar, piteous failure that makes not only angels, but decent human beings weep. And it is the same with nations. The weakness of the world to-day is in the Great Powers. The main reason of its poverty is its apparent wealth. Its success is its supremest failure.

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It has succeeded in finding the right means to attain the wrong ends. It is in the dark, and has lost its way. And yet there is light, and it grows brighter. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never overpowered it. The purpose and the true value of life are being progressively revealed in Christ, and as we patiently strive to find the meaning of our many-sided complex world in Him, there comes order out of chaos, sense out of nonsense, sanity out of madness.

If we will patiently brood over the tangled, confused, and tragic maze of facts which make up human history and experience, there will come the moment when we cry, "I see," and there will swim into our vision the master fact of Christ. We shall progressively perceive that He is the door by which we enter into the palace of Truth, as we faithfully apply the great hypothesis to the problems, personal and social, that baffle and perplex us. But we must apply it boldly and universally, we must not allow any part of our lives to remain unexamined and uncriticized in the light of it. The very essence of the hypothesis is in its universality, it either applies to everything or to nothing. If we apply it only to certain sections or departments of life we do not apply it at all. 'Now are we the children of God, it does not yet appear what we shall be—but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.' God has spoken and is speaking, and though His WORD does not reveal the whole of His infinite Mind, yet He is Truth; and as we apply and act upon the Truth we have, we gain more and more, until at last we come to know even as we are known. This is the Christian Faith.

Since so it is, and in that face for me,
The final beauty burns to birth,
And all things fair in heaven and earth
Are summed and centred in a mystery
Of Loveliness
Beyond compare,
How could my soul do less
Than worship Him as Saviour and as God!
Dim though my vision be

Yet that faint gleam my faith can see,
 Of Christ, is brighter than the sun,
 Without it all the world is bare
 And barren as a winter's day,
 Whose cold grey
 Hours run
 From dark to dark,
 Without a dawn or sunset sky
 To tell the Truth that Love is there
 Through all.
 Without it pleasures fade and fall,
 As petals from a rotting rose,
 To leave the thorns behind;
 Without it I am blind,
 And, through a wilderness of woes,
 Go blindly blundering on to death,
 And nothingness at last,
 Which is damnation of the soul.

What Science Has Done to Us

The statement of the great Christian hypothesis of life proceeds with a further vigorous emphasis upon its universality. Nothing which is of the nature of reality lies outside its scope, absolutely nothing. Everything which claims to possess significance or reality apart from the eternal purpose of God expressed in Christ is an imposture and a lie. In Him, and in Him alone, all things consist, as St. Paul puts it.

It is precisely to this universal claim of the Christian faith, that our modern way of thought and life is most obviously opposed. There are few who would not allow that religion ought to play a part in life, but most men would deny that it is meant to dominate the whole of it. Yet it destroys the very nature of religion to make it a department of life and thought. Religion is, from the intellectual point of view, an hypothesis as to the meaning of the whole universe, and from the moral and spiritual point of view a life based in every department of it upon that hypothesis. We cannot divide the world into departments without dividing ourselves,

and to divide the human personality is to destroy it. That is what we are doing. Destroying our souls by dividing our lives, and it is from that destruction that our religion ought to save us.

There are many reasons why this division of life into watertight compartments is a specially strong temptation to us in these latter days. It is a tragedy which arises directly from a triumph. There has been a modern triumph, and it is shallow thinking to belittle or deny it. The great and unparalleled advance of Science in the last century is one of the most dramatic and awe-inspiring events in human history. It is all very well for Disraeli to sneer at it, but his sneer is a judgment upon himself, rather than upon the great revolution in human affairs which he was blind enough to despise. The invention of the steam locomotive and the coming into the world of mechanical power, was probably the most epoch-making event in time, if we except the emergence of mind from matter, and the birth of Jesus Christ. It is as an event of enormous moral and spiritual significance, and the tragedy of our times lies in the fact that we have not realized that significance in Christ, and as part of the eternal purpose of God.

We have regarded it as what we call a purely secular event. No one would deny its immense importance from the economic, industrial, political, and social standpoint, but what on earth has it got to do with God or with religion? That is the typical outlook of the modern mind, all divided up into sections which are never joined into a whole. God made mountains, stars, and rivers, but man made machines. God made the country, man made the town. We divide the world between us, God and I, which often means in practice I and God. There is the horror of it, it is such rank impertinence, such ridiculous and insufferable pride, all the more insufferable because it is mostly unconscious. Let us frankly acknowledge that it has arisen partly in consequence of the power of false religion. Science had to fight religion for the right to seek after Truth. It has its saints and martyrs from Galileo downwards. They are every

whit as much God's saints and Martyrs as St. Stephen or St. Paul. The spectacle of Galileo sitting up in prison repeating the seven penitential Psalms, because he dared to differ from Moses and the theologians, and of poor Descartes burning his book "On the World" in case he got into trouble too, must have made the angels weep, if it did not make them laugh.

That nonsense was also the result of pride. Men suffered from what Hilary of Tours calls "irreligiosa sollicitudo pro Deo," a blasphemous anxiety to do God's work for Him. They had to protect God's Truth because He could not look after it Himself. We still suffer from that form of pride and of fear. There are still men who would persecute their political and theological opponents if they could.

But the modern form of pride, which finds expression in secularism, and the division of life into departments, has other roots as well as that of opposition to ignorance and superstition. It arises partly from the nature of the scientific method itself, which, as the field of human knowledge widens, makes more and more specialized study inevitable, and so tends to produce a specialized mind, blind to certain aspects of the truth, and is, moreover, in itself a method of abstraction, taking a group of phenomena out of their setting in reality, and examining them apart from their intricate relations to the rest of the universe. Thus the science of anatomy is bound to treat the human body apart from the mind, as the thing in itself, although a body apart from a mind of some sort is nothing but a potential mass of putrefaction. But still more the curse of pride is due to the fact that the men who made the great discoveries, and under God, bestowed upon mankind the mighty powers of which he is possessed, were not the men who used them, nor had they power to decree purposes for which they should be used.

It is often said, and still more often assumed in thought, that man has conquered nature and subdued her to his will. But the great men to whom we owe our present powers know how false a way of thinking this is. *Man has not conquered, he has learned to obey.* Those who have been trained to divest their minds of pride and prejudice, and with untiring

and persistent patience to watch, to ponder, and observe, striving to see things always as they are, in order to discover the law of their being, retain a wholesome awe and reverence for the great objective reality that faces them. They know that what they must attain to is not conquest but communion, they seek not to subdue but to understand and obey. Einstein has said of Max Planck, the physicist: "The emotional condition which fits him for his task is akin to that of a devotee or a lover." The very essence of a truly scientific mind is not pride of power but a passionate humility. Pride and cocksureness are characteristic, not of the scientist, but of the hack thinkers, teachers, and traders who impart or assist in exploiting the discoveries of other men greater than themselves. It is to this host of lesser minds and meaner souls that we chiefly owe our modern secularism. They swarm like vultures round any new gift God bestows upon mankind, seeing in it only power for themselves. They have no reverence or respect for nature. They have only one question to ask about any fresh discovery "Will it pay? Is there money in it?" They do not think of the new gift as a gift given for a purpose to mankind, they regard it as a lucky chance that has happened for themselves. That is the deadly danger of scientific advance. It takes a fine mind to make a discovery, but any fool, or cunning knave, can use it for his own ends. Thus Professor Soddy talks with justice of "The treatment habitually accorded in this country to the poor discoverer, and inventor, preyed upon by rascals of every description who flourish under the protective majesty of the law, and in the grip of a commercialism that deems it the highest wisdom not to pay for anything it can get by any other means!"

It is to this host of primitive and animal-minded exploiters that we mainly owe our modern secular world, which claims for itself significance and reality, outside of and apart from the purpose of God in Christ, and proclaims for itself a law which contradicts the moral law. It is to them we owe the fact that the century of science thought mainly in terms of Will, and of material power, rather than in terms

of Truth. Men were, and are still, drunk with power. They thought of the world as a dead material thing which they could mold and fashion into any shape they pleased. They did not perceive any worthy purpose in life; they were too intent on making it serve their own shortsighted and instinctive purposes. They only wanted to use things, and not to worry about what was their proper use. Utilitarianism was their characteristic mode of thought. They did not ask themselves so much "What does this mean?" as "What use is it to me?" Man was the measure of all things.

Religious people, for the most part, assented to the spirit of their time, allowing their religion to become divorced from everyday life, and failing to find any religious significance in the vast revolution taking place before their eyes. To them also this was obviously man's doing, not God's. It was a purely secular business without any bearing on the spiritual life of man. The results of this essentially irreligious and unthinking attitude, which still persists and is powerful to-day, have been literally disastrous. It has meant that every fresh blessing from God has been turned into a curse, and every new power has become a master rather than a servant. It is not machines that serve men, but millions of men that serve machines, and become themselves mechanical. The whole world has grown into a mechanical device which runs or fails to run according to laws of its own—and whether it runs or fails to run, grinds out misery for millions. It went on grinding faster and faster until it reached a ghastly climax and we stood and looked upon the crowning blasphemy, a great modern gun in action, discharging poison gas; a monster embodying within itself a whole century of exact and beautiful knowledge, and using it for a purpose that would make a decent savage blush with shame, while from the altars on both sides passionate prayers went up to a tribal God of War for victory in arms. It is a shameful memory. Shameful not merely because it was barbarous, but because it was blasphemous, a denial of the omnipresence of God, a rejection of the great hypothesis, "Through Him all things came into being which is of the nature of reality." It is as

though we had tied Christ to our cursed guns and made him look on while we butchered and dishonored his children. It is this denial of Christ which is shouted at us from every corner of our modern world. Everywhere we are surrounded by the sacraments of our sin, the outward and visible signs of our inward and spiritual disgrace. God gave us stones wherewith to build the new Jerusalem, and we turned out Glasgow, Birmingham, Calcutta, and Tokio. Those who have knowledge can understand what those names stand for in terms of human souls.

And yet that is not the whole picture, thank God. If it were, I could not believe that there was a God to thank. God is not mocked. His Will works on, in spite of all. His purpose still prevails. The purpose which is immanent and inherent in the great new powers is being wrought out. Those who have eyes to see can see it, and the first need of our time is for seers, men and women with vision. God has overruled our folly, and made even the wrath of man to serve Him. He has flatly contradicted our plans, and destroyed our purposes, making them serve His own. The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small. The work of countless millions of men trying to use God's gifts to serve themselves, and make themselves independent and self-sufficient, independent of God and of their fellowmen; the ideal of independent individuals, independent classes, independent sovereign nations, which was the dominant ideal of the age of change, has been overruled and has produced a world in which independence is revealed, as being not merely a philosophical absurdity, but a practical impossibility, a world in which interdependence, universal interdependence, is the most obvious and self-evident fact of life. Thus the essential nature of the world in which we live, has, in spite of our blundering, our blindness, and our sin, progressively revealed itself in time, and it is made plain that we cannot live in it unless we conform to the Christian standard, and attain to the Christian virtues. The new environment, which is the due development of the old, but is nevertheless new, unparalleled and unprecedented in the history of man, de-

mands imperatively as a response, that new life which came into the world with Jesus Christ.

We did not propose for ourselves this new creation, we never intended it, so far as we intended anything, it was the exact opposite we sought, and are still seeking; but there's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will, and God has made of the world one body, which, if it is to live at all, must learn to live exactly in the manner in which St. Paul describes the life of the Church "closely joined and knit together by the contact of every part with the source of its life, deriving its power to grow in proportion to the vigor of each individual part; and so being built up in a spirit of love."

The Alternatives the World Faces

There are just two alternatives that face the world to-day, either that life or agony and death. The enormous increase in population, and the conquest of space and time by increased rapidity of communication, both of which are only rendered possible by a continual division and subdivision of labor, have locked and bound us all into a material unity of universal interdependence from which we must therefore either acknowledge and respond to in spirit or perish. Our environment constitutes a self-evident moral and spiritual challenge. We must either adapt ourselves to this intensely complex and delicate network of human relationships, which our environment imposes upon us as a necessity, or face the perpetual and inevitable alternative of death, which has faced all living things ever since the world began. That is no "high falutin'" extravagant theory, but the plainest and most indisputable fact in the world of to-day. It is the Lord's doing and is marvelous in the eyes of those who see. Once more we return to the prophetic view of life, and see it all as a matter of life and death, a crisis, a great choice which we must make now or never. And this choice comes to every individual soul, and his salvation here and hereafter

depends upon how he answers to the call. *The fate of the world depends upon the social responsibility of the individual, and his power and willingness to bear it.* It is in form and content a social responsibility, arising out of the new relationship with our fellowmen and women into which the working out of God's purpose has brought us, but it can only be borne by individuals in the last analysis. Corporate action we must take, but right corporate action cannot be taken except as individuals hear the call and answer, acting as personalities responsible to God for their actions. The question of all questions is whether the ordinary individual man can bear the enormous burden of personal responsibility which the new world imposes upon him. At present it seems impossible. The ordinary man is bewildered and perplexed, trying to shift and shirk the responsibility, and to put his trust in mass movements and organizations. Mass movement and organization we must have; those who despise and decry them are mostly people who do not want to bear the moral responsibilities which they impose upon them, but desire what they call freedom, power to express themselves, independence of this crawling crowding mass of humanity, which they gratuitously assume is inferior to themselves. If they are clever enough, and forceful enough, they can still gain for themselves, and maintain under the protection of the law, a certain measure of this freedom, living in the world as if it were made for their special benefit, but their lives are a living, or rather, rapidly dying lie.

The outcry against organization and rational regulation of our corporate life is largely the refuge of moral cowards from the insistent call of God. But mass movement and organization can themselves be used as a refuge from that call, they can be used to save the individual from the painful duties of thought and righteous action, and, when they are so used, they constitute the most terrible menace to which we are exposed. When an organization or mass movement becomes an end in itself, and mere loyalty to it is regarded as the highest duty, whether it be a nation, a class, a party, or

a Church the result is the moral and spiritual degradation of the individual soul. Churches, nations, classes, parties, unions of a hundred different kinds, are necessary and inevitable, it is worse than useless to object to them, but they will be good or bad, constructive or destructive, *exactly in proportion as they increase or decrease the sense of personal responsibility in the hearts and minds of the individuals composing them.* The fate of a complex civilization ultimately depends upon the mental and moral quality of the individuals who bear it.

It is, therefore, not merely necessary that we should be as good, individually, as our fathers; we must be very much better. Advancing civilization with every step of progress makes greater and greater mental and moral demands upon its bearers. This is the will of God, the method, a stern and terrible method, by which He educates His children.

There are many who declare that the method is not divine but devilish, that it is a scandalously cruel and manifestly ineffective method to which man has no power to respond. They regard civilization, and its moral complexity, as a curse, an invention of the devil, or the result of accident, which will inevitably collapse, leaving men to return to the simple life which they are really capable of living. To them modern problems, politics, industry, economics, are purely secular still, they have nothing to do with pure religion, and the simple Gospel of eternal life. They do not want them brought into Church or into prayers; they want to have one place upon earth where they will never hear a word about war, wages, housing, unemployment, and all the rest of it. They have my sympathy, but it will not do. It is only another way of evading responsibility, and refusing the call of God to come up higher. The religion they want would not be religion at all; it would be a species of entertainment and relaxation. That is what much of our religion is, a substitute for the picture-show. We come because we like the service, the music, the preacher, the atmosphere of the place. It soothes us with its sanctity and enables us to sleep and dream. But this is not religion. These churches

are not churches, they are little herds of like-minded people snuggling up to one another for comfort and warmth as animals do. They have their yelps and yowls just like the beasts, their party shibboleths, and common cant, but the life of God is not in them—the mark of the beast is upon them. Their unity does not depend upon their response to the call of God, but upon the primitive instinct of the herd, whereby birds of a feather flock together—Protestant birds and Catholic birds, High Church, Low Church, Free Church birds, but all birds obeying an impulse, not men that hear a call. The world is full of flocks and herds, but what it needs is a society, and a society only exists as every member of it is consciously and intelligently responsive to the call of a higher purpose, and obedient to a higher Will.

It is this universal Society which the environment of modern civilization presses upon us perpetually as an imperative necessity, as the only way by which we can attain that harmony with our environment which is life. God calls us through His gifts to follow the more excellent way of Love, which is the only way of life. The very essence of religion is to give to these new relationships their true moral and spiritual meaning, to link up our daily work with our daily worship, our common duties with our common faith. Civilization demands the Christian virtues, and cannot continue to exist without a greater and greater measure of them in every part with the Presence of that "Person expressing a reasonable purpose through Whom all things came into being, and apart from Whom not a single thing came into being which is of the nature of reality." Therefore, its call is the call of Christ.

The thunder of our modern traffic, the manifold complexity of our modern industry, the intricate workings of modern economics and finance repeat, and give new force and meaning to the pleading of St. Paul for His Lord. "I therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that ye walk worthy of the call, wherewith ye are called;"—humble, for the world is God's not yours; meek, for every human being with whom you are brought into contact is a soul for whom

Christ died, a sacred personality, and you have no right to use Him for yourself; patient, for the task is tremendous and men are frail; forbearing one another in Love, for violence is useless, and domination does not help; endeavoring to keep in the bond of Peace the unity bestowed by the spirit of Christ, the only unity which in the end can hold. There is but one Body, life up your eyes and look upon it, this new world Body that I have made, wrought of iron and of steel, whirling on its multitude of wheels within wheels, jointed with a million miles of rail, with its wire nerves that tremble to the touch of thought, its very ether vibrant with reasonable speech. Sweat and blood, the tears and terror of mankind, the travail of the soul of God are in it—but it is done. There is but one Body, and there must be but one Spirit. If that body is to live it can only live in Him through Whom it was created—the eternal WORD of God; through Whom all things were made, and without Whom not a single thing was made which has been made. So through the thunder of our world machine there comes a human voice, saying:

O heart I made, a heart beats here for thee,
 Face my hands fashioned see it in Myself,
 Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of mine,
 But Love I gave Thee with myself to Love,
 And thou must Love me who have died for Thee.

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